

# TURRET TALK

*The Newsletter of the*

**Blacktown and District Historical Society Inc.**

PO Box 500, Blacktown NSW 2148



**President:** Sharyn Wicks 9622 8309  
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**Treasurer:** Graham Wicks 9622 8309

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The next General Meeting of the society will be held on **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2017** at **7.30pm** in the Craft Room at **The Bungarribee Hub**. For those of you who may not know, the Bungarribee Hub is located off Steeltrap Drive, in the Bungarribee Estate off Doonside Road. There are traffic lights at the entrance roughly opposite Douglas Road and there is some public art in the landscaped gardens. ie tall red posts which represent the old post and rail fences around the original property and three dark horses which may be hard to see at night. All the streets in this section of Bungarribee are named after race horses bred when the Bungarribee Farm property was a horse stud in the nineteenth century. To reach The Hub, follow Steeltrap Drive around until you see a bridge with tall red lit up poles. Do not cross the bridge but turn sharply right onto Sir Hercules Parade. Keep going down this street until you see The Hub building in front of you to your left. There is plenty of parking and a walking ramp for those who need it.

Our guest speakers on the night will be **Graham and Sharon Rawstron** and **Carolyn Gould**, all from The Friends of Bella Vista Farm. Graham is the President of the group and Sharon was a teacher with a special interest in humanities. She is also involved with the presentation and promotion of the history of the farm and its digital archive. Carolyn Gould OAM has convict ancestors (1791 & 1794) and parents who were keen researchers and writers of Australian history. Carolyn has had a lifetime interest in this topic. Her career paths included film and TV then administration and editing magazines for a rural organisation. Residing in Kellyville for the past forty years, local history, especially Bella Vista Farm continues to be fascinating. Carolyn is currently involved in documenting and digitising the archives for The Friends of Bella Vista Farm.

The title for the presentation on Monday night is **“Moving On”. The Friends of Bella Vista are facing new challenges as the role of the organisation has changed over the past decade.**

The Friends as an organisation was established in September 2006 as an initiative of the then Mayor of Baulkham Hills, Sonya Phillips. The purpose was to organise events, tours and open days, raise funds and continue the restoration and maintenance of the historic kitchen garden. These were the specific activities outlined in the original letter from the Mayor but The Friends activities were not limited to these specifics.

The Friends, small in number though they are, have continued to work tirelessly over the last ten years to achieve these and many other objectives. Some like the kitchen garden have fallen by the wayside only to be replaced by others. What we have found is that

there has been a shift in our purpose and relationship with the Council as their use and management of Bella Vista has changed.

The one constant is the importance of Bella Vista Farm as a heritage site and The Friends are developing different ways to work toward its preservation and its promotion as a significant heritage site.

This will be an interesting look into the continuity of an historic site that we are all very familiar with so please don't miss this meeting.

Our next excursion on **Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> May** is a tour led by one of our favourite tour guides, **Kerima-Gae Topp**. The tour starts off at the Sydney Olympic site which includes a visit to The Brickpit where the Ring Walk displays many panels with details of the history of the area. We will also visit another area where several historic buildings still remain relating to the days when an abattoir operated on the site. Then we will visit the old Lidcombe Hospital site that has incorporated heritage buildings and plantings into a new housing development. Lidcombe Hospital, which during its life has also been known as Rookwood Asylum for the Aged and Infirm and Rookwood Boys Reformatory and Model Farm, operated for over a century from 1893-1995 as a major State Asylum for the aged and infirm, then an important State teaching hospital specialising in geriatric care and rehabilitation. Lunch will be 'buy your own' at Carnarvon Golf Club and after lunch we will visit Rookwood Cemetery, one of the largest Victorian burial grounds and the largest necropolis in the Southern Hemisphere. Opening in 1867 at Haslam's Creek (now known as Rookwood) it had its own mortuary station linked to the city by train. During a tour through the cemetery its colourful history will be related plus stories of interesting occupants, from the famous to the infamous. Don't forget your cameras to bring home a memory of the magnificent sandstone chapel of St. Michael the Archangel, a stunning example of Gothic revival architecture built in 1890.

Morning tea will be supplied by the society and the cost for the tour is **\$25pp**. The bus will leave Blacktown Council car-park **at 9am**. I still have seats available for this tour if you would like to go, please call me, **9622 8309**, if you cannot attend the May meeting.

Welcome to new members Ian & Alma Burr, Dr. Jennifer Stephenson and Jane Seaman. We look forward to you joining us at our General Meetings and on our tours.

**Don't forget Back to St. Bartholomew's Day this Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> April. It will be a great day and I will be looking for you.**

Sharyn Wicks.  
President.

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